



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 149

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2003

No. 40

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. STEVENS].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, these days here in the Senate are filled with crucial issues, differences on solutions, and vital votes on legislation. We begin this session with the question You asked King Solomon, "Ask! What shall I give You?" We empathize with Solomon's answer. He asked for an "understanding heart." We are moved with a more precise translation of the Hebrew words for "understanding heart," meaning a "hearing heart."

Solomon wanted to hear a word from You about the perplexities that he faced. He longed for the gift of wisdom so that he could have answers and direction for his people. We are inspired by Your response, "See, I have given you a wise and listening heart."

I pray nothing less as You answer this urgent prayer for the women and men of this Senate. Help them to listen to Your guidance and grant them wisdom for their debates and decisions. All through our history as a Nation You have made good men and women great when they humbled themselves, confessed their need for Your wisdom, and listened intently to You. Speak Lord; we need to hear Your voice in the cacophony of other voices. We are listening. You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TED STEVENS led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). The Senator from Pennsylvania, the acting majority leader, is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will resume consideration of the partial-birth abortion bill. We had a good and vigorous debate last night and all day yesterday and made substantial progress on the bill. I appreciate Senators' willingness to come forward and debate this measure. In fact, I encourage Members who have not made opening statements and want to speak on this legislation to come to the floor today. We are moving expeditiously. We got a good unanimous consent agreement yesterday that calls for votes later this morning, perhaps at the latest early this afternoon.

My understanding is we have, beyond the two amendments that are locked in right now, two additional amendments that could be offered this afternoon. There may not be any other amendments. I want to make sure Members know there is a chance we could end up even finishing today. If Members are waiting, thinking they have plenty of time to come down and speak on the underlying bill, I encourage them to come down. We will be debating two amendments this morning. Senator BOXER's amendment will be up first. Actually, it is not an amendment but a motion to commit the bill to the Judiciary Committee. There will be 2 hours of debate, equally divided, on that motion, which we will proceed to momentarily, and subsequent to that debate we will have an hour debate on the Durbin amendment. All of that time is equally divided. Then we will proceed to votes on both of those amendments.

If all time is used, we will have votes at roughly 12:30 this afternoon, if not earlier.

As I said, there are two other amendments of which we are aware that could be offered this afternoon. I encourage Members who wish to participate in this debate to please come to the floor and do so this morning or this afternoon.

I remind my colleagues that a cloture motion was filed on the Estrada nomination yesterday by our leader, and that motion will ripen tomorrow morning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, through the acting majority leader I say to the majority leader, we believe we have the ability to finish this legislation very quickly. Anyone who wants to offer an amendment should get with floor staff forthwith because we are in the process of propounding a unanimous consent request to terminate this legislation. If people have amendments they want to offer, they should advise floor staff forthwith.

Also, we were able to work out yesterday, following the dialog I had with the majority leader on the floor, with Senator DASCHLE and people on our side to allow one of the circuit court nominees to go forward with debate, with up to 6 hours debate. Hopefully, we can complete that tomorrow also.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent, because the Senator from California has requested that the time on her amendment be the full 2 hours, and Senator SANTORUM and I have taken a little bit of time this morning—I ask that be the order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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